



Nayeli Garcia
West Haven, CT

Support for SB 21, SB 28 and SB 29

Dear Chairs and Members of the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee,

My name is Nayeli Garcia Romero. I live in West Haven. I graduated from New Haven Public Schools, and I am a student at Gateway Community College.

I belong to ULA, Unidad Latina en Accion, where we defend the rights of immigrant workers.

I am part of Recovery For All, with people across the state who want a better Connecticut with justice and equality.

This pandemic has been especially hard for women and immigrant workers like me. Wage theft, labor exploitation, and violence against women have increased. Thirteen Connecticut billionaires got \$13.7 billion in additional wealth, while one in three Latino and Black children continue to live in poverty in Connecticut.

When we ask for basic human rights like health care, we are told that there is no money in the budget. Immigrant adults and children under age 9 have no health care in Connecticut, because there is no money in the budget. But this is one of the richest states in the richest country in the world. We have enough wealth for everyone to live a good life.

During the pandemic, the restaurant where I worked cut my hours, but I could not collect unemployment, because I am an immigrant. I had to drop out of the university to support my mother and pay the rent. I exposed myself to the virus every day, cleaning houses and working fast food.

Even before the pandemic occurred, immigrant workers have been suffering in dangerous workplaces in Connecticut. We have seen our sisters and brothers die and get injured at work, without any intervention from the state to make the workplace safe.

Many of us experience wage theft, when employers fail to pay us the minimum wage or the overtime that is required by law.

The state of Connecticut needs to invest in the safety and protection of workers. We need a Labor Department that will educate workers and employers about the Connecticut labor laws and enforce those regulations.

Connecticut should provide Hero Pay for the workers who were called heroes. We grow your food, transport your food, and prepare your food. We clean the hospitals and schools. We care for your children and your elders. We care for your homes and gardens. We should have a good life in Connecticut. We should have good pay, good schools, and healthcare for all.

I urge the Committee to make the right choice and to pass SB 21, SB 28 and SB 29. Thank you.